

# SINK HOLLOW

VOL 5



## EDITOR'S NOTE

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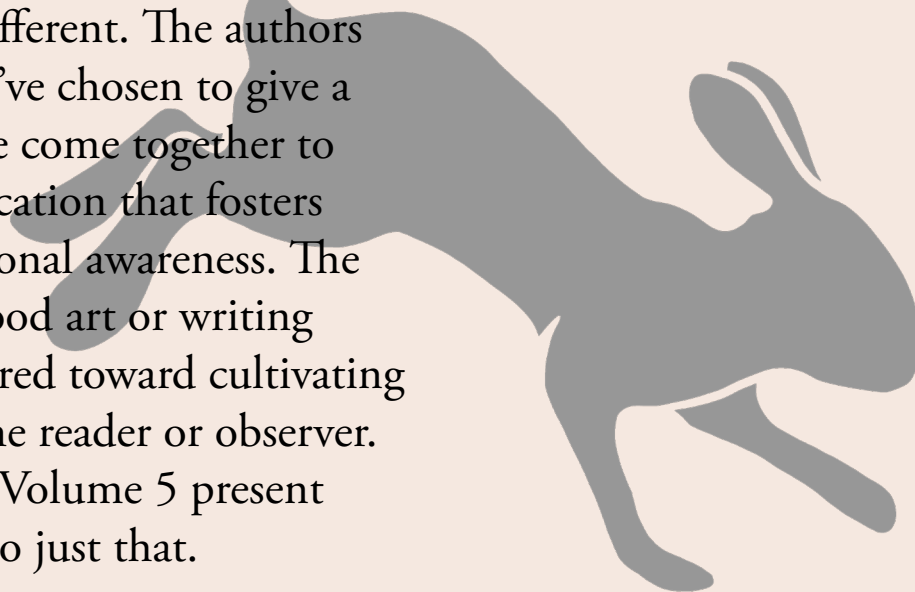
**REAL CONVERSATION  
STARTERS RARELY COME  
FROM POWERPOINT  
EXPLAINERS OR TWEETS,  
THEY COME FROM  
CHALLENGING ART. THERE'S  
A POWER IN FORCING  
AUDIENCES TO INTERPRET  
SOMETHING SHOCKING.  
-NOEL RANSOME**

”



During my time with Sink Hollow Literary Magazine, I've watched five issues go through the creation process. From the initial submission picks to final design edits, I've had the immense pleasure of seeing every volume bloom from nothing into powerful pieces of thought-provoking art.

This volume, our fifth one as a team, is no different. The authors and artists we've chosen to give a home to, have come together to create a publication that fosters a unique personal awareness. The goal of any good art or writing should be geared toward cultivating a change in the reader or observer. The pieces in Volume 5 present themes that do just that.



We hope you take the time to observe the humanity that rests on these pages. It is raw, real, and worth every second spent with it.

Enjoy,

**Jess Nani**

editor-in-chief

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**PLEASE STOP**

sara schellenberg

melissa marsh





**WATER**

teralyn brown





**EARTH**

teralyn brown



# LOOK OUT

teralyn brown







OF THE SEA

teralyn



# OF THE SUN

brown

# TO MY DEAD GRANDMOTHER

daniel eastman

I heard that you had died  
the night of New Year's Eve.  
Looking back, I'm surprised  
that it didn't happen sooner.  
Your passing was a blessing.  
Good news  
as I could surely have  
used the leave of absence.  
I heard myself hitting the hard 'd' when  
I said that you were dead,  
adding additional finality to your ending.

I heard you spent your latter years  
in your tri-toned home  
in all its glory, ocean blue vinyl siding cracked  
and overlapped  
with lacquered wood slats and sheet metal.  
I heard your navy carpeted living room  
was matted and stamped with a footpath  
from the past, decades of comers and goers  
who didn't come around no more.  
Just you and yourself  
in the mysterious mirrored shelves  
featuring frames of angels and Elvis.  
Just like the elderly,  
you thought it never got any better than The  
King.

I heard your were confined to a tank  
like a fish in reverse, fitted  
with an oxygen pumping pendant.  
I heard you talked to your husband's ashes,  
I heard you still took him to bed with you.  
I heard you had lungs like burned bridges  
over rising rivers. Something about a  
two-to-three pack a day smoker on a  
diet of soda and Hostess  
that really shows over the years.  
Your razor-edged facial expressions  
turned down with time, became  
aged paper dragged over pavement.



I heard the glare of your glasses lenses  
was reminiscent of something  
like a teardrop frozen in place  
or a glacier.  
I heard toward the end you never moved.

I heard you call us losers and whores before  
I knew what those words were really used  
for—  
too soon. I was just a kid when  
I heard you spitting vitriol at our heels  
when we wised up and walked off.  
I heard you somehow always kept  
a steady stream flowing over an empty cup.  
Your spine was crooked your whole life  
and it wasn't just poor posture.  
Your hair was thin enough so  
you never had to own a comb but  
my mother felt the fire of your brush  
when you whipped her  
like the frigid winds of those lake effect win-  
ters.  
I heard you had a habit of seeing a psychic  
like your last efforts to blacken a red ledger.  
You played the poor person better  
than anyone I'd ever met,  
but your shelves are empty now  
and we've found your old stash of cold cash.

I heard you made attempts  
to make amends for all the meanness.  
At least with my mother you'd succeeded.  
I heard you stuck pictures of my radiant  
smile to the fridge with some magnets.  
Please read "radiant" as inebriated.  
My only regret,  
if I have any,  
is that I never knew a version of you  
that was worth knowing.  
I heard you thought it'd be nice to hear from  
me again.

But what was I to say?  
There was more distance  
between us than just age.  
I heard it all but I never listened,  
because you are nothing to me,  
just an item on a to-do list that  
I promised I would visit if  
I could ever get around to it.  
I'm not glad.  
Just a little indifferent.  
And now that list will go unfinished.





DAILY E

josselyne





RRANDS

e morales





# 3 FORGE RD. SHARON, MA

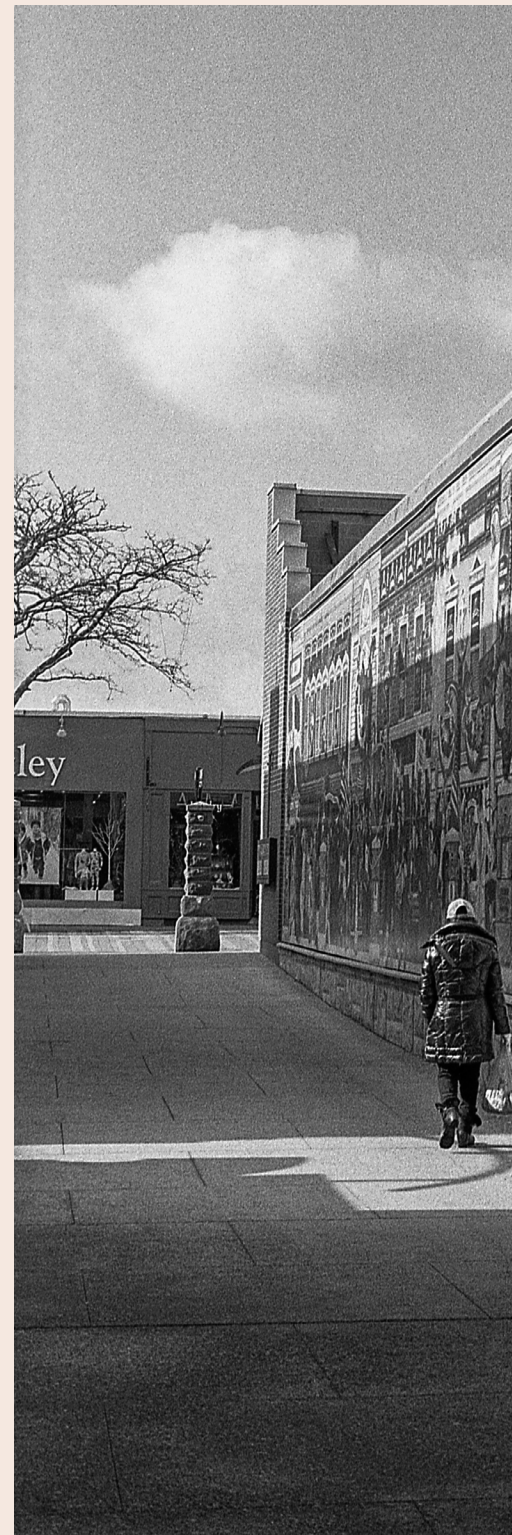
scott kaplan

# 7 FORGE RD. SHARON, MA

scott kaplan







## 28 CHURCH BURLINGAME

scott k



# RCH ST. STON, VT

kaplan

# LOMITA CREEK: AN ELEGY

mckayla conahan

Think about the itch of fall into the next  
fluffed pile of leaves. The bitter taste of a plum  
from your dark little tree. How is it like biting  
into shadows? Keep safe your baby brother's  
plump starfishing hands. Keep safe those moments made of  
squashed strawberries—all red and the black earth,  
accidentally eating grass and dirt. Handfuls of curled-up doodlebugs,  
crepe myrtle seed pods. Knowing nothing of sadness and yet  
how to coo like a mourning dove. Mom speaks music to you.  
The dust rises only two feet before it hits our nostrils.  
What was the interval of afternoon  
back then, when the few hours that the sun guttered  
from the sky were longer, wider, livelier?  
When the whiffle ball, leaving  
the pitcher's mound of your father's palm,  
contained one more heartbeat? What secrets about time  
lie enclosed within the way your fingers wander  
along the dewed plane of a leaf of lamb's ear? Tell me about  
the way things are. Would you believe me  
if I said that last July I intended to destroy this body  
that your cells will work tirelessly to create?  
Of course it will be a few years yet until you know  
what the word surrounding that act means.  
When you find out, please don't  
cry, darling. Please save the sensory information  
of how a branch of juniper smells. Don't yell at your mother.  
Don't fight with your brother. You don't know how it is  
to be a younger sibling. Lately I've been dreaming  
of children and I'm not sure why but they bring me joy. I need  
joy. Spool up this data for me, and leave it tucked  
somewhere in the Lagerstromia, where only we  
will know to find  
a kinder self.

# OLIVER STOOPS

artist spotlight





projections of ascension





garden throne





capri motel





inside o





outside

# LUNAR

rinnah shaw

It's the summer of 1983, and two runaway boys live in my house: Raymond and Shane. Raymond lives in the stuffy hot furnace room, next to the kitchen, and Shane lives in the basement with the spiders. They have been here for at least half a year, maybe longer. I like Raymond, because he talks to me more than anyone, and I don't like Shane, because he talks to me hardly at all.

Raymond is at the front door, getting ready to leave for work. I watch him from behind the banister as he pulls on his jacket, his favorite puffy neon one with the purple stripes up the sides. Once I asked him why he wore a jacket to work in the summer, and he told me that sometimes it gets really cold in the Dairy Queen where he works, because they have to keep the ice cream cold, right? But it keeps the people cold, too. I also wonder if he wears it to cover some of those circle-shaped scars on his forearms, but I don't ask about those.

"Are you leaving?" I ask him, knowing that he is, wishing that he wouldn't. Sometimes, if he has a day off, we play Monopoly. I like playing Monopoly with Raymond, because sometimes I win. With Matt, my older brother, I never win.

"Yeah." He brushes a strand of golden-brown hair out of his eyes. "Gotta pay the bills."

I lean my face between the cool wood of the banister. "What bills?"

"The bills." He laughs, reaches over the railing to ruffle my hair. "The ones that gotta be paid."

"Okay," I say slowly. I'm fairly sure he's avoid-

ing a real answer, but I let it pass. “Can we play Monopoly later?”

“Mm.” He purses his lips as he pulls up the jacket zipper. “Don’t know about tonight, Mel. I’m going out with some pals...might be back late.”

He tugs on one sneaker, then the other. He’s got on the coolest blue and red striped socks, but even they can’t stop the disappointment from pooling in my stomach.

“Oh.”

Raymond tuts and shrugs his backpack onto his shoulder. “Hey, don’t look down. Why don’t you play with Misty?”

I stick my tongue out, thinking.

“Vacation.”

He bends down to tie his laces. “Linda?”

“Summer camp.”

“Kristin?”

I hesitate. “...She’s a little crazy.”

Raymond snorts and straightens up, patting his pockets to check for his keys. “Aren’t we all?” He pauses and fixes me with a regretful glance.

“Look, Mel,” he says, “You’re basically a young adult now, aren’t you? Nearly nine! You can find something to do. Tag along with Matt or something.”

I press my face harder against the wood, crowding out half of my vision with the flesh of my cheek. “Matt doesn’t like me.”

“Well...that’s a shame. You’re pretty great.” He takes a breath, like the compliment felt unnatural, before opening the front door. He flashes a smile. “See ya later, Meligator.”

“In a while,” I mumble, turning my back before he does. The door clicks shut, and I know he’s bounding down the steps to run to work. I scoop up my book from where it sits on the stairs. Raymond’s always late. I probably didn’t help, but he refuses to say anything.

I wander to the back door, through which I can see Bobby Schwitz, brandishing an archery bow. He spots me in the window and waves, accidentally releasing the arrow he’d been nocking. It flies swift across the yard and sticks with a clunk in the wood of our fence. I don’t even flinch. Matt still has a red scar right above his knee from Bobby Schwitz. It’s no surprise that he missed, but this means playing the backyard is out of the question.

I turn on my heel and walk down the hall, past the front room. Mom sits on the couch, staring blankly out the window. Joshua, my baby brother, plays at her feet. The morning light filters over their faces and glows in Joshua’s dark hair. The noise of my brother’s toy cars cracking together fills the house, along with the clattering of the ancient dishwasher, and the whush-whushing of the washing machine way older than me. I consider grabbing a snack, but then I remember that Matt ate the last bit of cereal yesterday, and the milk has been gone for days.



There isn't much money to go around in our house, which tends to be the case when your dad is a traveling minister and your mom is often empty-eyed. But Mom says that even so, we have to make home for the two runaway boys.

"Bad home lives," she'll murmur with a meaningful glance towards the furnace room door, Raymond's room. "The world is hard, but God is good."

My father had met them both at the youth organization he runs at the local high school, but my mother had been the one to invite them to stay.

My dad is a big man, a wrestler-turned-golfer, an atheist-turned-minister with a head of jet black hair that he keeps combed back. He's got a big voice and a loud laugh, but lately I don't hear it too much, because he's been traveling for a lot of faith conferences. My mom is thin, with a long torso and wild auburn hair that she likes to tease into a great big tuft at the top of her forehead. During the school year she works part time as an office lady at my school, but during the summers she's just sad.

Dad says that sometimes her heart gets too heavy, so that's why she has to sit down, or lie down, or cry some of the weight out until she can get up again. Sometimes the heaviness makes blinking hard, and she'll stare out the front window for hours without any change in expression, watching the cars streak by too fast for a neighborhood, and the fluttering of the leaves of our maple tree as Joshua plays with his Matchbox cars.

Today is one of her Sad Days. Dad is gone on a trip, the last one of the summer. I leave without a word, shutting the front door behind me.

**R**aymond comes home late, long after dinner. I hear first his right shoe-thud- then his left one- thud- in the threshold as he throws them off, and Shane's shouts from the basement to keep it down up there, a man's got to sleep. Joshua knocks down the card tower I was building on the living room floor with a giggle.

Raymond collapses into the chair, his hair disheveled. He smells like cigarettes and something else I can't identify. He drops his bag onto the carpet with a heavy sigh.

"Hey Mel," he says, without looking at me. His voice is low and scratchy. "How was your day?"

Before I can answer, Matt calls out from the kitchen. "She got in trouble with Crazy Dave." His summer math homework is flung across the table like a tornado had grabbed it, his thin lips twist up in a grin.

I shoot him a glare, then glance back at Raymond. The runaway boy's light blue eyes watch me from under the shadows of his hair. Sometimes I wish I had blue eyes instead of brown. My whole family has brown eyes speckled with black, like wet sand. Joshua pushes some cards onto my knee, hoping that I'll build another tower so he can knock it over.



“I didn’t do anything wrong,” I protest. “I just fell into his rose bushes.”

Raymond blinks. “You fell into his rose bushes?”

“Yeah.” I show him the palms of my hands, which Mom had dabbed in ointment and plastered with band aids that had Baby Muppets on them. There had been a lot of thorns. By the time I had run back home, rivulets of blood trickled down my fingers, dripped onto the sidewalk and onto my black Converse. Crazy Dave’s shouts still ring in my ears. You damn kids! I’ll call the fucking cops on you, I swear I will!

“God, Mel,” Raymond breathes. There are dark bags under his eyes that I haven’t noticed before. “Be careful around people like him.”

“I know.” I turn around to build another card castle for Joshua. My little brother is nudging a black beetle with his finger as it picks its way over the beige carpet.

Crazy Dave used to be a vacuum salesman, but now that he’s retired, he likes to yell at children, tend to his rose bushes, and paint his trees the same blue as his house. The blue paint is as light as the sky, spreading from the roots, along the trunk, up to a few inches on the main boughs. I used to wonder if Crazy Dave had managed to catch slices of the sky to wrap around the trees, but now I know that that can’t be true. The paint is starting to flake around the knots in the bark, revealing the natural darkness within, and the top branches are beginning to die, turning gray and ashy as the leaves wilt.



## THE 1975 AT THE GREEK THEATER ON APRIL 26, 2016

michael adachi

I still think that if I were to take a chisel and chip at the sky, I'd somehow find dying tree bark underneath.

But then I think that maybe nighttime is when the bark shows through, even more beautiful than the blue pigment, speckled with stars and wisps of galaxies.

Raymond says, "I have a story for you, Mel." Raymond likes to tell me stories after work, sometimes. I don't always understand them, but I like to listen to them. He sits with his legs draped over the chair's arm, his chin tucked to his chest like he's sleeping.

## TUNNEL

michael adachi



"There once was a boy with a hole in his stomach. It was a pretty big hole, as big as this." Raymond forms a softball-sized circle with his hands.

"He had always lived with it. When he was born, the doctor said, 'This boy is not finished growing, but I can't put him back.' So he had to live with it. It didn't hurt much, but it made him feel cold when the wind would whistle through, and he was always hungry. Sometimes people would laugh at him. They would say, 'Why does that boy have a circle of empty in his stomach? Why is he incomplete?' So he thought, maybe I can find something to fill this empty space, here. Maybe I will find the right circle thing, so that I can be whole again."

He sighs, eyes fluttering closed.

Matt flips over one of his papers, clicks at his calculator. The beagle next door yodles a long, warbling howl.

"Sorry, Mel. I'm too tired to finish," Raymond says, swinging his legs down from the chair. He rubs the back of his neck and stifles a yawn. "I'm going to my room."

"Okay," I say, wondering about the hole-in-the-stomach boy and how someone like that could be. He shuffles through the kitchen, squeezing Matt's shoulder on the way. He pauses to grab a piece of bread and an orange off of the counter.

I finish the card castle, and Joshua knocks it over with a sharp laugh.

The beetle inches across the floor.

**R**aymond comes home from work at the normal time the next day, and it's a Better Day for Mom. She even cooks a beef stew in the crockpot, with peas and carrots and onions and everything. My hands still hurt, so I can't help cut up the vegetables or the bread. I set out paper napkins instead. Joshua is in the living room, trying to pull the fur out of our cat's face. It poofs up and hisses at him, but he doesn't stop.

"Evening, Mrs. Andrews. Hey, Mel." Raymond dodges around my mom as she ladles stew into bowls. "How was your day?"

I shrug. It's been a Better Day, I didn't fall into anyone's rose bushes. But I don't feel like telling him about the bunnies.

Apparently there's a rabbit nest under our maple tree. I found out when I leapt down from where I was reading my book and landed inches away from it, nearly crushing them. They shot from the nest like a firework, towards the bushes and across the green lawn and one of them, over the curb and into the street. I realized that their very lives were in my hands, so I had grabbed a bucket and started catching them, one by one, their fragile, squirming, soft baby bodies wriggling in my hands. Once I had captured them all, the bottom of the bucket was a writhing mass of gray ears and tiny claws.

Matt sticks his head around the corner and grins, showing off the gap between his two front teeth. "The housing project got burned down again."

"Really?" Raymond scoops up some spoons and scatters them on the table. He forgets

that Dad isn't here, because he puts down six. Shane never joins us for dinner.

"Yeah. Everyone knows it's Tony, but he says if anyone tells, he'll burn down their house before the police can get 'em." Matt's eyes are gleaming, as if he wished that he had been the one to do it. "The smoke was so thick, you could smell it across town. They were almost done with the skeleton of the project, too."

Mom shakes her head. Her glasses steam up with the heat of the stew. She can't stand that pyromaniac. Tony loves fire too much. We're just lucky he's sticking to houses without people in them. Crazy Dave is only one of the many "wild" people in our neighborhood, Mom always reminds us.

"The summer heat brings it out more," she likes to say, "Sin festers when it's warm." I've never been too sure of what that means, or if I believe it, but as the summer drags on, and houses burn, and the cuts from the rose bushes sting in my palms, I'm starting to consider it.

Joshua yanks out a tuft of fur from the cat. It claws him in the cheek, and soon they're both yowling. Mom rushes over. Matt, Raymond, and I pick up our bowls and take our seats at the table, murmuring a quick prayer under our breath before plunging into the hearty stew. Maybe Joshua will learn his lesson this time.

We eat, then Raymond scrubs his face and yawns. "I have a story for you, Mel." I straighten, thinking about the hole-in-the-stomach boy. "Okay."

He taps his fingers on the table. He's wearing a faded Coca Cola shirt, and his eyes are bright. The purple bags under them are still there, though, and there's dirt under his fingernails. "There was a man who lived on the dark side of the moon, all by himself. He didn't know how he got there, just that he is." Raymond takes a long pause, eats a bite of stew.

"The dark side of the moon isn't all that bad, but it's lonely, and cold. The man can see the sun sometimes, from out of the corner of his eye, and somehow, he knows that on the other side of the moon, there was the Earth. A planet full of people like him, living in the light. And he knew that the moon revolved around that Earth, so certainly, one day he would have to see it."

I imagine the crater-pocked ground of the moon from my school books, spreading in every direction, and a man with no one to talk to, no one to help. A gaping loneliness opens up in me, and I pity the moon man. I want him to find Earth.

"You know what the funny thing about the moon is, Mel?" Raymond asks, tapping on the table again.

Joshua walks over to sit beside him. He stares into his bowl of stew, a bandaid on his cheekbone.

"The far side of the moon never faces us, even though it's always turning. We always see the same side. So even though the moon man tried to walk around, he remained in the dark side of the moon, because he was walking against the rotation."

I blink slowly. "So... he'll never find the Earth?"

Raymond tilts his head, presses his lips together. I know that he is only eighteen, but he suddenly strikes me as very, very old.

He has an answer, but he asks a question instead. "Have you ever seen an eclipse, Mel?" I shake my head. "No."

He picks up his bowl and goes to the sink. "Yeah. Neither have I."

**T**hat night, I go out to check on the bunnies. The dusk is warm and sleepy, and their mom must have come back by now. I learned, earlier, that baby rabbits are not very smart. I learned that if you can manage to catch all of the panicking babies, you can put them back. They are so small, helpless, and dumb that if you just take the fluff of fur on top of the nest and hold it over their twisting bodies for less than a minute, they will fall right to sleep. They thought it was their mother's warmth, the pressure of her body, when it was only my rose-bush-scratched hand covered in Muppet band aids pushing down on them. I tricked them into forgetting how I had nearly crushed them beneath my black Converse only minutes earlier.

But when I look into the dark crevice beneath the maple roots, they're gone. I realize that even though the babies had forgotten about the danger, their mother must have recognized it. She had seen it, smelled it, and knew to take them to a safer place.

I'm sad that they've gone, but I like the



thought of new beginnings. I gaze up at the new night sky, inky and scattered with stars, and wonder about the two boys from Raymond's stories.

Maybe the boy with the hole in his stomach needed the moon, I think. Maybe the moon man just needed to start walking in the other direction.

I go back into the house.

**S**ummer break is over, and Raymond has been gone for five days. He went to his second-to-last day of work on Friday and didn't come back.

I sit on the front porch steps, the summer dying hot on my skin. A brilliant crimson spreads over the roofs of my neighborhood, and some birds gather in our maple tree, sing a hesitant song.

I stare out at my street, lined with houses that look the same, filled with people that look the same, too. We're all white-skinned, all big hair and colorful clothes. The houses are all the same mold, the same tan color- except Crazy Dave's blue house, with trees that match the sky- and I wonder if identical houses mean identical stories. I wonder how many runaway boys live in their furnace rooms and basements. I wonder if they think about boys-with-a-hole-in-his-stomach or moon men, all alone and cold.

My birthday was yesterday. Dad came home just in time, pleased but exhausted after the drive from Cincinnati. His broad shoulders

filled the entire hallway when he came back, suitcase in tow, black hair swept neatly over his one bald spot. His booming voice fills the house again, and it is somehow even warmer with him here. Mom made me a cake, chocolate, but it was a Sad Day, so Dad sang louder than anyone as if he could drown out the sadness that curled under the table and in our guts.

Shane didn't come up from the basement, and Raymond is gone. No one has mentioned him.

Late August birthdays can be bittersweet like that, I think.

I'm nine, now. Matt turns eleven in September. He says that when you turn eleven, you enter the age of doubles, of which you probably only experience nine, if you're lucky. "11, 22, 33, 44... all the way to 99, and then maybe 100, a double zero. But that's really old, and you'll probably die before that," he told me last year. It's strange to think that he's had the same amount of doubles as Raymond has: one for turning eleven, even though Raymond is 7 years older.

The dying sun is bright and painful, and suddenly my eyes are full of tears. Raymond didn't come back for my birthday, so why should I think about his?

I scrub my eyes and blink rapidly, suddenly ashamed and fully aware that I'm crying on the front porch step. The world is too big for me, I think. The people don't make any sense. Sometimes they paint their trees blue, or they have to put baby rabbits in buckets. Sometimes they tell you stories of the moon, and then they leave. For days, or maybe forever. I go inside. I get out Monopoly, even though I

know that there's no one to play with.

**T**hat night, the front door clicks open and closed. Matt turns over in his sleep above me, the bunk bed creaking. I slip out from under my sheets. My sleep shirt, one of my dad's XL short sleeves, tangles over my athletic shorts as I creep down the upstairs hall in the pitch black. I hear a deep sigh, the thud...thud of shoes hitting the threshold. Raymond is back.

My chest fills with a bubble of joy, but then I pause. I'm still angry at him for leaving. The bubble sinks into my stomach, turning into something greasy, but I climb down the stairs anyway.

His shadowy figure is outlined by the dim outdoor lights by the front door. He is standing still, a hand over his face. I lean against the banister, watching him. My eyes adjust better, and I can see that his shoulders are slumped, like he is holding up the whole world. "...Raymond?"

He startles violently, stumbling back and nearly cracking his head on the framed picture of our family, from before Joshua was born. Mom keeps saying that we'll replace it soon, when she can hire a professional photographer again.

Raymond draws in a raw, cracked breath. "Mel." His hand doesn't leave his face. He makes no move to turn on a light. "You should be in bed."

"I heard you come in," I say.

"Oh," he mumbles. "Well, you should go sleep. I'm gonna crash, too."

There's something wrong, but I don't know what. His voice is scratchy, like mine when I've been fighting with Matt and yell too much. Raymond draws back from me, curving into himself.

"Mom made baked chicken and potatoes for dinner," I tell him, forgetting that I'm angry for a second. Sometimes he forgets to eat, which I never understand. "There's leftovers in the fridge that I can microwave for you, if you want? Mom started letting me use it."

He shakes his head almost imperceptibly. "That's okay. Go sleep, Meligator."

The greasy bubble starts welling back up in my stomach, angry and black. I stand up. How can he just come back after five days and then try to send me away? I thought he was my friend.

I reach for the light switch on the wall. He takes a sharp step forward. "Mel, don't-" My eyes smart at the sudden brightness as the lights snap on. I glimpse Raymond's face. His eye is the color of eggplant, round and swollen like a small moon beneath his fingers. Raymond drops his hand, the game over, a dark emotion flashing over his face too quick for me to recognize.

I don't say anything, but we both feel the question in the air.

"Go to bed, Mel," he says, his voice low and hard.

He watches me for a moment before starting down the hall.

“You were gone for five days,” I call after him. My voice is wobbly, and I hate it. “No one said anything, and you didn’t tell me. You forgot about me.”

Raymond stops with his back to me, muscles tensing.

“God, Mel,” he spits out, “Not everything is about you, okay?”

His words ring in the air, sharp and awful. We both freeze, tasting them, holding the bitterness on our tongues. They go right through my body like radiation.

“Okay,” I whisper.

“I’m sorry.” He takes a deep, shuddering breath. His right eye is sunken, hidden beneath the swollen red skin, and his lip is split. A tear glints in his good eye. “I’m going through a lot right now.”

“Okay,” I say.

Raymond shifts his weight. “And I need you to go to bed.”

“Okay,” I say, louder, but my voice trembles again. I turn to go back up the stairs. The bubble in my stomach has popped, and now all that greasy, cold blackness has coated my insides. I think about how it is like the far side of the moon, now. I don’t like being there at all.

Raymond’s voice echos up the stairs before I reach the top. “Mel...”

I look at him, at his purple eye, at his split lip, starting to scab, at the way he holds his shoulders. I am taller than him on the stairs. He suddenly looks like a very sad person, but it’s a different sadness than Mom’s, one that I’m both familiar and unfamiliar with.

“Let’s go sit outside, okay? Please.”

I don’t say anything, this time. I walk down the stairs, push past him, and open the door.

The moon is a sliver in a black sky, and the crickets sing. Raymond is silent beside me on the porch step, his breathing slow and even. I find a Monopoly dollar in my shorts pocket. I scrub it between my fingers as a cool breeze ruffles my hair. I’m not tired, but I don’t feel awake. I’m just... there. We watch small ribbons of cloud shiver across the moon, one at a time.

Raymond says, “I wish I could still see the world like you do, Mel.”

I don’t say anything. I don’t know what he means.

“You still see it as something to explore. And good, usually. You see the good in people, too.” He talks fast, like he’s worried that he’ll lose what he’s trying to say. “The universe is vast and incredible and you want to see it. You want to see it, because you think that there are things to see. And you could, if you tried.”

He lapses into silence again, rubbing the circle scars on his arms.

I fidget with the paper money. I don't know  
if what he said is true, but I do know that the  
universe can be beautiful. I know that there  
are trees the color of the sky, baby bunnies  
and summer nights, parents who love you,  
birthdays. But I also know that there is a lot  
of wrong, that there are hole-in-their-stomach  
boys and Sad Days, burning houses, runaway  
kids with purple eyes, moon men, all alone. I  
don't know what to think of all that.

I tell Raymond this, and he smiles sadly.  
“Yeah. Neither do I.”

Then I look at the sliver of the moon, which  
will be back to a whole in a few nights' time,  
and I think about how there are dark times for  
everything, even the moon.

The crickets sing to me, Raymond, and all the  
universe, under a glistening tree bark sky. 





# PERSECUTED BUT NOT ABANDONED

charlotte mann





**HEALY**  
michael adachi



# MATTY

michael adachi



# GET OLD AND BEG SOMEDAY

leah waughtal



An old penny that tastes like blood. Raking fingernails  
through dirt. We are scabs and metal sliding  
down hollow throats. Wetness on bare lips. We are  
three fourths of not enough for these sharpened teeth.

A body, a small, apple core thin thing. Venus flytrap lashes.  
We are pretty. We are worthless. Bent shoulders, heavy hips.  
We carry. Bruised knees. Broken wrists. We are taken. Callouses  
and tiny grease burn marks like freckles on swollen and wilting flesh.

We are hungry. Barcode vendetta. Dollar bill boiling. Leaves to  
ashes. We are little birds with straws for legs. Marble eyes on the  
dead fox, giftwrapped around your esophagus. Money for body.  
Money for amputated vocal cord. For quiet.

A smiling white face. An always eviction notice. A womb swollen  
with shame. Commodification on check memos. We be dirty work.  
Knotted arthritic fingers. Mommies made of mildew stains. Mommies  
made for meals. Mommies who never had enough money.



## LEMON TREE

deaniera wibisono

# MATTEO BONA

artist spotlight





asylum





the c





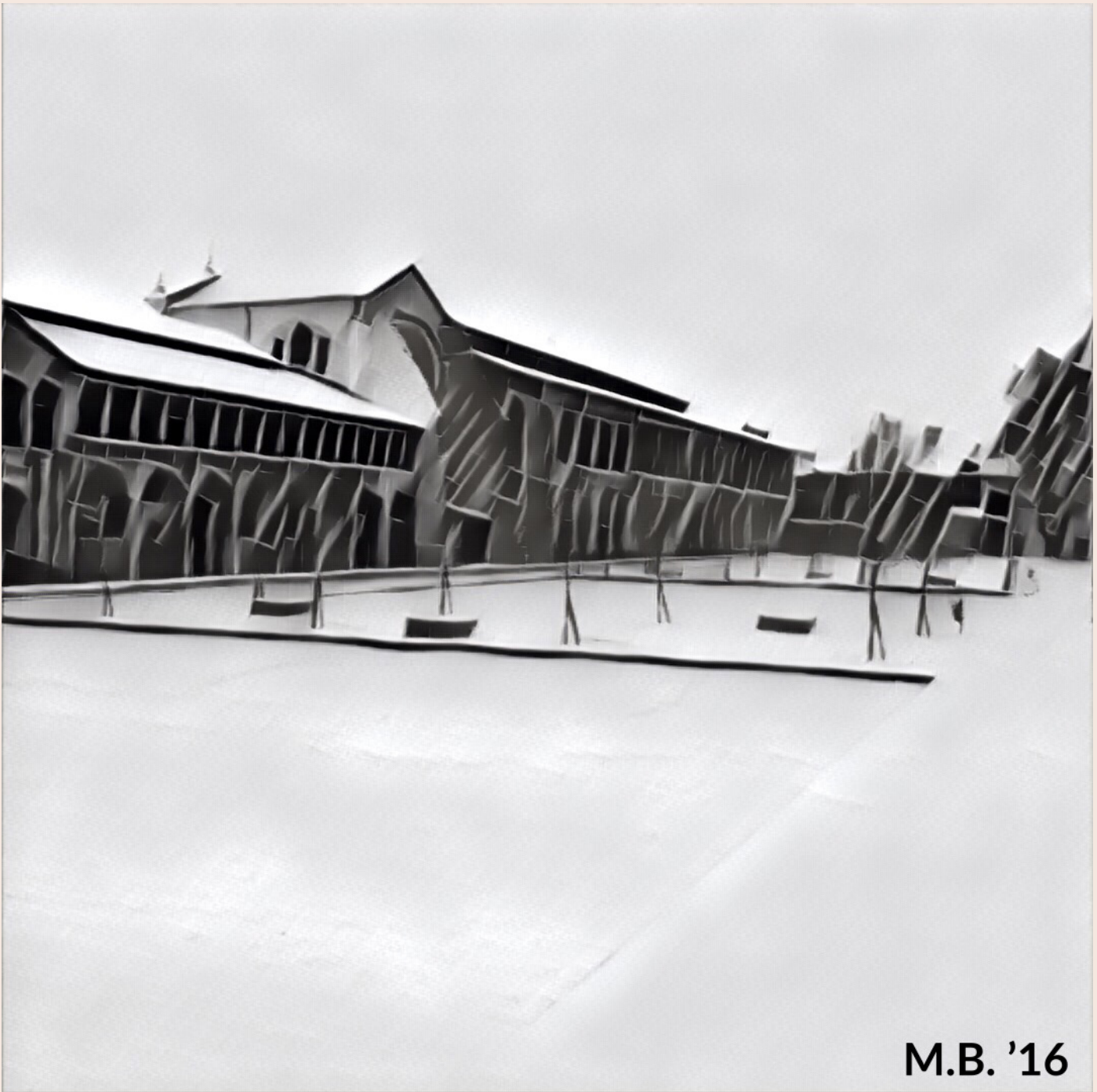
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lawn





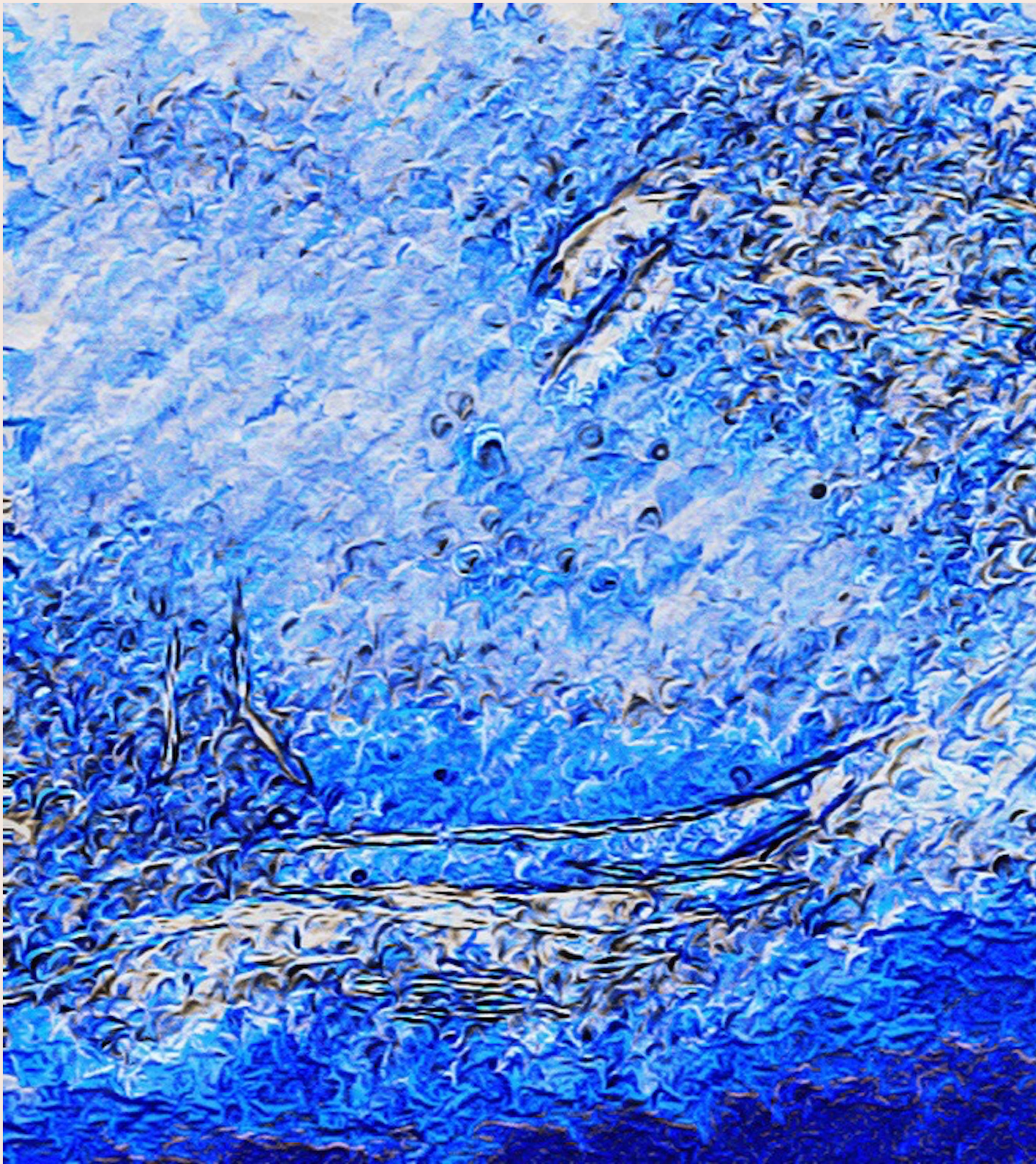
loneliness



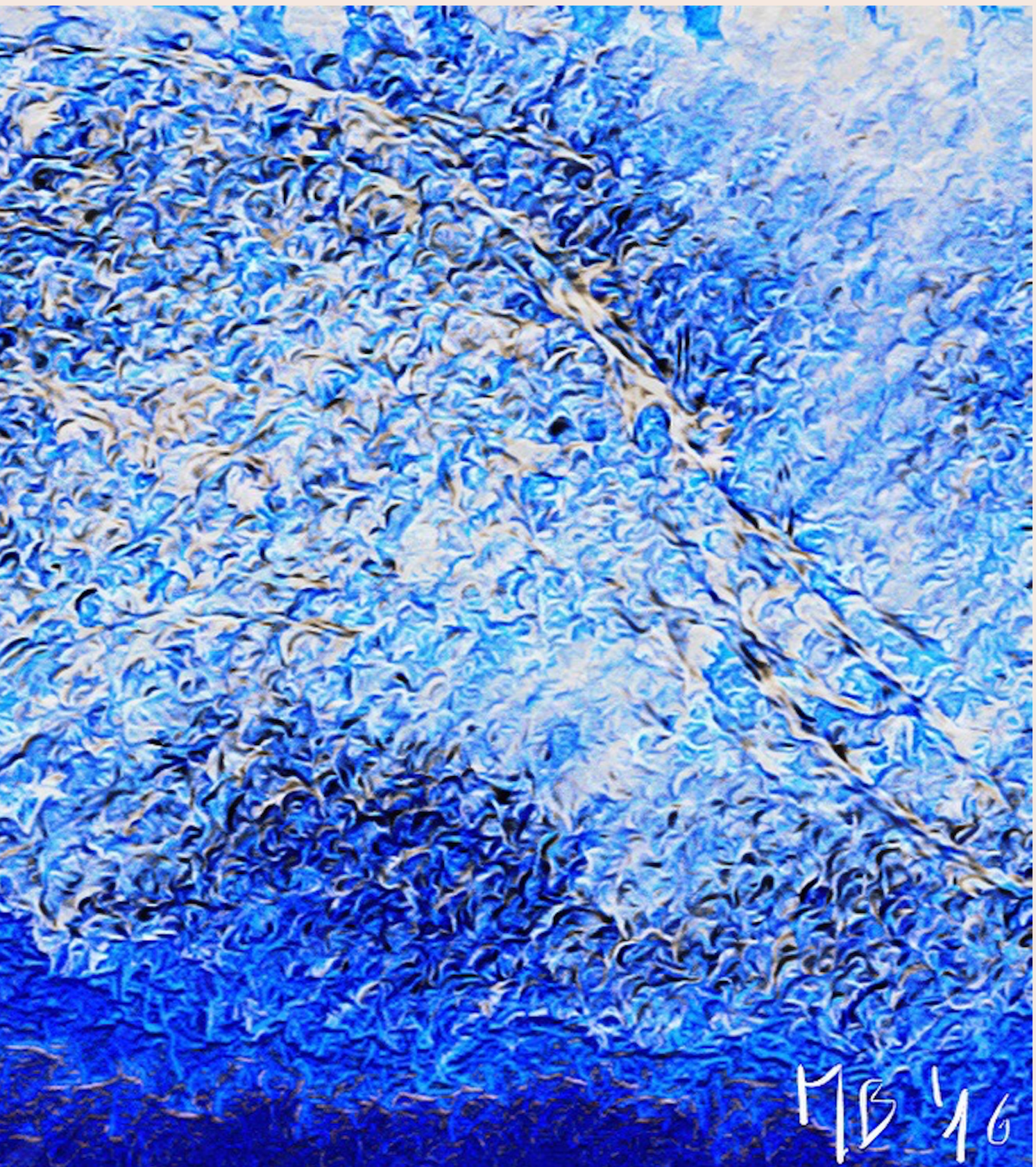
M.B. '16

a view of the being



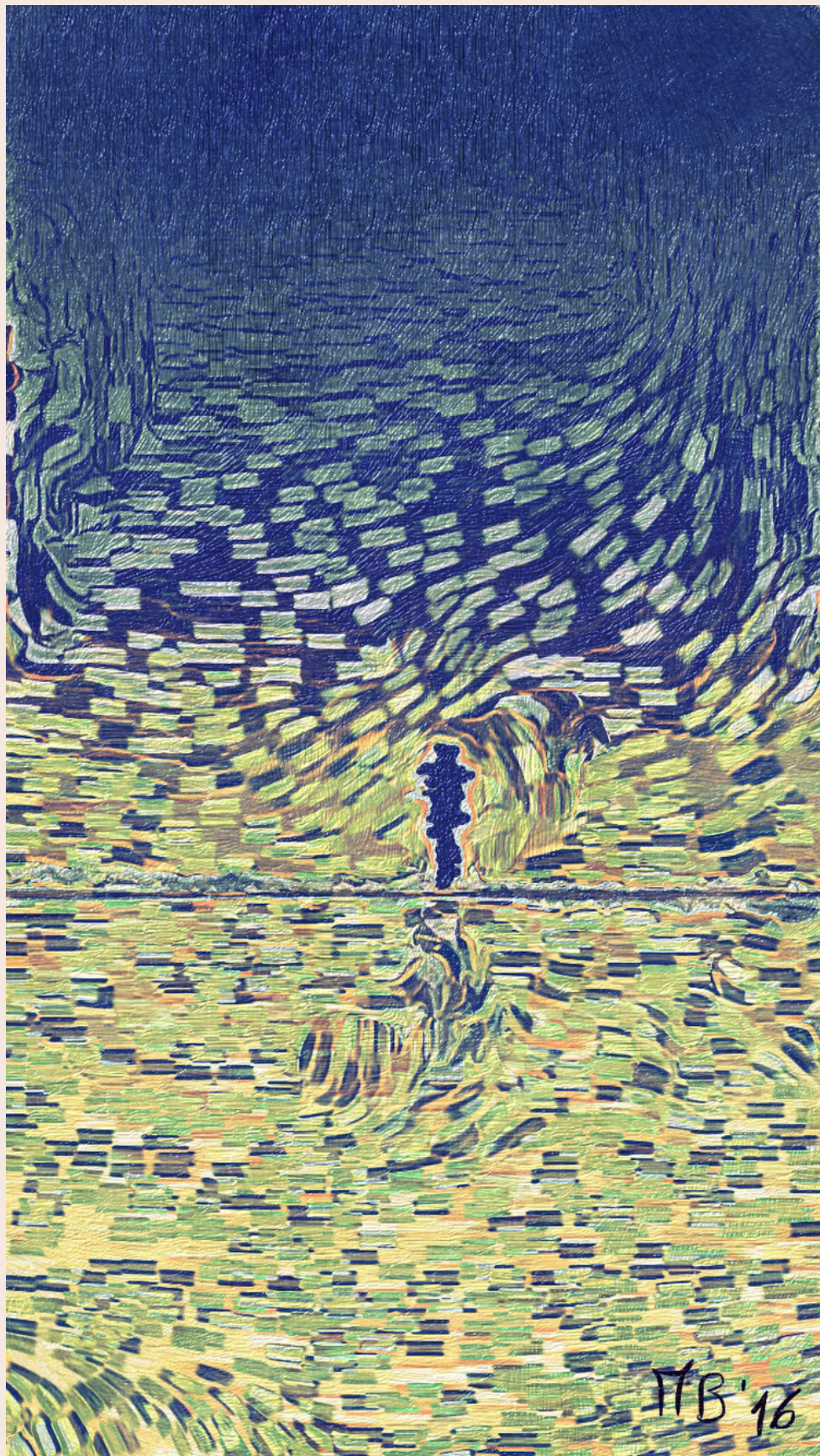






tter





metaphysical necessities





lost





ven



ice



# WHAT I'LL NEVER SAY

jane mckensie

“

You can't wear that; your stomach is too big.”

Imagine your eleven-year old daughter so excited to wear the dress she'd picked out for her fifth grade graduation. I'd looked up from the sink and met your eyes behind me in the bathroom mirror. You were frowning, studying me with more scrutiny than any child deserves. After we talked, I stood in that bathroom for a half hour, staring at myself, for the first time wondering, was something wrong with me? Do you know that the entire ceremony all I could do was glance down at my pink dress, shrouded in an oversized jacket, wondering how my tummy got so big and if anyone else noticed it? I didn't even hear them say my name.

*“You need to start waxing your eyebrows. No boys like girls with caterpillars on their foreheads.”*

The first time you plucked my eyebrows was the day before I started sixth grade. I was clutching my build-a-bear, my big sister holding me down. And I was crying. I didn't want to do it. You insisted that I had to, because I looked terrible with bushy eyebrows. You kept saying to me in the moment, that pain is beauty. But all I could think was, why am I hurting myself to do something for some boys that I don't even like? I couldn't figure out what the point was.

Why did my mom and my sister stare at themselves in the mirror for hours, trying to fix every little imperfection they could find. They'd scrutinize themselves much worse than

any man ever would. They were never happy, never pleased. So, why did they care so much? It didn't make sense to me. But you didn't care about what I wanted, you didn't care what I thought. You just wanted a pretty little daughter to parade around to your friends. All that mattered was the outside, while I was aching on the inside, not understanding why I wasn't good enough for you the way I was. You spent hours plucking away at my eyebrows, but you plucked so much more away from me.

*"If you pick soccer over cheer, I won't be at any of your games."*

I tried to do both for so long, but I'd never liked cheer. From the beginning I only did it because it made you happy, and that made me happy. As I got older, the seasons started conflicting, and I had to choose. But you didn't win this one, did you? I chose soccer and I chose for me. I suffered through seven years of texting you my game schedule and taping it to the fridge, and you making excuses and flat out not coming. Even your second husband came to watch me, but you couldn't be bothered. It was cold and you didn't know any other parents on the team. A mom is supposed to be the person who is always there, that a child can count on. I wasn't enough of a reason for you to come.

*"Your dad is an ass. He doesn't do anything for me anymore, so we're going to live at an apartment for a while."*

Stuck in a six hour car ride to Ohio, eleven years old and crowded in between my brother and sister, desperately trying to drown you out with the songs on my new MP3 player. You, screaming at me to take out my earbuds,



**EVERYWHERE  
EVERYWHERE  
EVERYWHERE**

deaniera wibisono





# ETERNAL HOPE

charlotte mann

telling me I needed to hear the truth. That my dad was worthless. My daddy who loved and fought for me day in and day out, who was the only one who ever tried to stick up for me. He meant the world to me. There was nothing he couldn't do. My daddy. Tearing him down when he wasn't there to defend himself, spitting poison into the ears of his children. I didn't notice any of the signs. I was too young, too gullible. I'd believed dad when he started sleeping in the guest room, saying that your bed gave him a headache. Eventually I realized it was who he had shared the bed with that gave him a headache. Eventually I realized why you had gotten your own job for the first time in my childhood. Eventually I realized why you cried yourself to sleep every night, listening to the same song over and over again. Eventually I realized why dad would never come inside until he had to, why the shed became his home, even in the coldest months of the year. I moved out of my home

a week before my twelfth birthday. Seven days later I opened a new iPod shuffle, and everyone acted like everything was okay and you weren't just trying to buy me off. It was only the beginning of the end. I was a lot older when I'd realized you had never meant for the separation to be forever. I felt like I was being torn in half. What does it mean when the two halves that created you turn out to be incompatible?

*"She doesn't even read anymore."*

At thirteen I sat dumbfounded, as you lied to the specialist. Now I understood why you wouldn't let me bring my book into the waiting room. This was the fourth one you'd taken me to see. You were insistent I had ADD, even though three specialists had made me take several tests and had determined that I did not. This was the fourth try. "Mom, if all these doctors say I don't have it, why do you want

me to take this medication so bad?” “Because it helps you lose weight, Janie. Look how much it helped your sister.” You’d emailed me dozens of websites, information on ADD, insisting I memorize the symptoms and lie to the specialist, determined I get on this medication, determined to fix me. The fourth specialist denied the diagnosis as well. Nothing is wrong with medication, if you need it, but I’ll never forget the day I sat with my dad in the car and quietly asked him, “Dad, what do vitamins look like?” He’d been confused and asked, “What? Why?” “Do they look like little white circular pills?” I’d asked. He’d looked at me very closely and said, “Janie what are you talking about?” “Nothing.” I muttered, quickly shutting down. For over a month, you’d been giving me vitamins. If you were giving me your Adderall, what were you taking?

*“Get your ass back home or I’ll call the police!”*

I don’t remember what we were talking about. I do remember the intense hopelessness I felt as we spiraled down into another screaming match. I’d come home from camp only hours ago, on a high from hearing about how loved I was in Jesus and how no one could take that from me. Yet somehow you did. Calling me a hypocrite to my face, telling me I wasn’t good enough for Jesus.

It was when you threw the blow dryer at that bathroom mirror, shattering it, that I turned and went into my bedroom. I took the cat kennel down from my closet, shoved Frankie into it, and walked out the back door. I was halfway down the street before I heard you yelling but I didn’t stop yet. I didn’t know where I was going but I couldn’t be there. But

you yelled the right thing and with an impossibly heavy heart and equally heavy feet I made my way back.

The intense hopelessness I felt. I didn’t want to be here, I didn’t want to be anywhere. I tried to go to my room. You broke my door knob. I sat in my closet, with my hands over my head. Every five minutes you’d burst in, screaming at me.

You’re so ungrateful.

You’re such a bitch.

I didn’t raise you to act like this.

You don’t appreciate what I do for you.

There was a strong building in my chest, a roaring in my ears. I had never wanted to just disappear so badly in my life.

A few days later of not leaving my room and my stepdad trying to make peace, and bringing me meals so I didn’t have to come out and face you, the fighting started again. I lay in bed, staring at the wall in the dark.

You’d burst in, scream at me at the absolute top of your lungs, slam the door and stomp away to go smoke a cigarette. I could hear you outside, bitching about me to Eddie, saying it loudly because you knew I could hear you. The tears burned hot as they’d streamed down my cheeks. The roaring in my ears was starting to say something. Tell me to do something. I got up and went to my desk, opening my drawer and pulling out the knife I’d put there months before. I went into the closet, just cradling it.



My chest felt so full, like it was going to burst and I'd cried so much there were no tears left, just this overwhelming painful ache. I'd stared at the knife for a long time before giving up and hiding it inside the suitcase in my closet where it would stay for months.

I'd thought of my dad. How could I leave him? I was all he had. My mom had turned my siblings against him and the few times I saw him were the best times I had. He was my best friend, even though he couldn't protect me from you.

*"Why are you crying? Did you really think he'd want to date you?"*

The only time I've ever asked a boy out. I sat outside the school after; you were a half an hour late. I got in the car and wanted my mommy to tell me everything was okay, and that you loved me. Instead you laughed in my face. Acted like it was nothing. And then, when you asked me if I wanted to go to the tanning bed, I said no because I was having a bad day. For months you'd been making me go to the tanning bed and go to the gym and go get my eyebrows waxed, and if I ever fought you on it you'd scream until you got your way.

This time my disobedience led you to kicking me out for a month to go to my dad's and 'learn to appreciate you and everything you do for me.' Only to have my eighty-year old grandma call me later that day and say, "I heard you left your mom, does this mean I'm never going to see you again?" and cry. Later I had my older siblings call me. Equally angry. "How could you leave mom? How could you hurt her like that? She said you hit her! She said you screamed at her and cussed her out."

I think, had my siblings bothered to get to know me better, they'd know that doesn't exactly sound like me. But they loved my mom and I was just the bratty little sister 'struggling through the divorce.' What kind of sick manipulation is that? We didn't talk once that month and it was the first taste of comfort I'd had in four years.

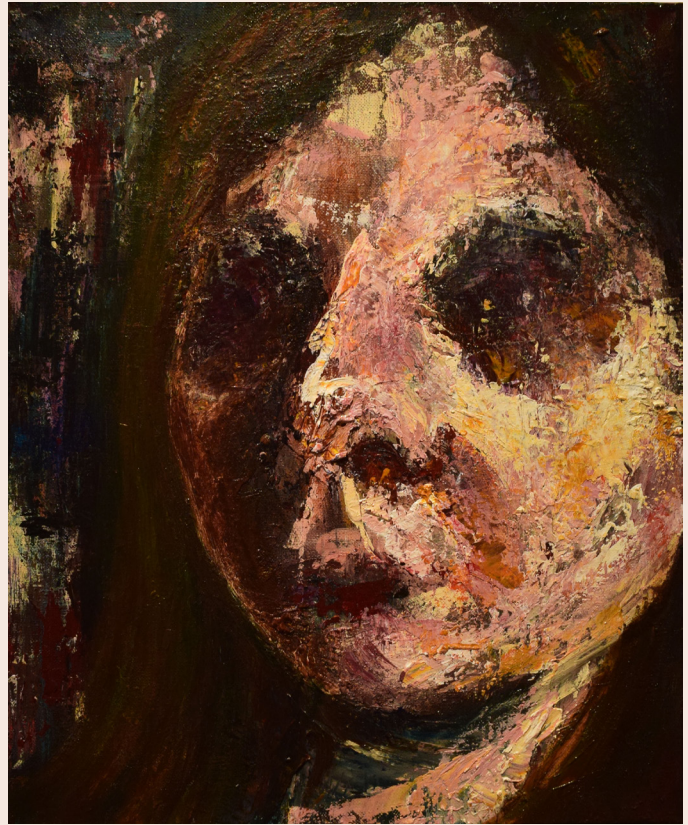
*"Obviously I love Jane, but I just really think my life would have been better if I had just stopped at two."*

My heart dropped like a rock when I read this in your Facebook messages. It was a casual conversation between you and an old family friend. After years of you getting on my laptop and reading my messages, screaming at me over stuff I said to my dad, I decided to get even and snoop on you. Going on Facebook and typing 'Haley' into the search box. I had no idea what I was looking for... But I found my worst fear. Easier without me. Everything would be easier without me. My family would be better off without me. My parents could get along if it wasn't for me. My brother was twenty-four, and in Portland. My sister was twenty, and away at college. I was alone in your whirlwind of a divorce. You two were constantly in court, fighting, using me to get at the other. My dad printed out the emails between him and you, to show me what you'd been saying about me. You saying he needed to back up when he grounded me, that you were worried I was going to get pregnant at fourteen that I was going down the wrong path. Mom, at fourteen I had one friend who didn't even talk to me when we were in school. No one was interested in getting me pregnant, and the only time I ever snuck out a boy stuck his tongue in my mouth and I cried. Yes, you were right to be worried. You talked about how I was failing school, and was going to amount to nothing in my life. I actually was doing really bad in school, because I'd given up. If nothing was going to be good enough for you, why even try? It was until I started my sophomore year that I realized I needed to be trying for myself, not you. Not everything was about you. I couldn't let it be anymore.

*"I hope you have a daughter and I hope she's a little shit"*

*just like you.”*

I hope I do have a daughter. I hope she knows she is beautiful and talented, no matter what. I hope she is fierce and impossibly proud of who she is. I hope she knows she is important, that she matters. I hope she is clever and smart and no one tells her she can't do something. I hope she loves herself and never goes a day in her life without knowing how loved she is by her family. I hope she loves people with her whole heart and never looks back and never regrets. I hope she lets herself feel emotions but knows where to draw the line. I hope she is everything I am not and everything I wish I was.



## NEW HORIZONS

charlotte mann





# BEAUTY WITHIN

Jenny Kang



# NOSTALGIA

Jenny Kang





# THE TONGUE LACKS TACT AND WILL TOO OFTEN FACE TROUBLE

Alexander Zitzner

Innocence, somewhere, was weathered between fist-fights, lipsticks, cock  
roaches & how they each began to stash bitterness in our cheeks for aging.

A tried swish, rinse with wine these milestones out, smears leaks from sips  
& stains your shirt to newer shades of melancholy, those few redder blues.

When I was a boy, to pay for sin, Grandma charged my tongue chili pepper  
flakes until I liked burning, & bar soap until my breath hid curses cleanly.

I thought trouble, an internal organ, would pain me even if it was not used.  
So I lugged heavy a demeanor creased into my palms, in ways strained like a

slingshot string, southpaw punch, switchblade swedge; oh F\*ther, how I've  
been licked & licked those who never got close to a taste of me. Settling to

just sew lost teeth back through my gums, burn a bridge & make my island.  
We can be crossed only so many ways before words forget their own shape

& meaning, ways when your name is nicked when dropped: a sulphuric egg.  
Others, like a bust when you've jumped, crashed from some beloved pedestal.





# TRACE OF PLACE i

Petra Lee

# TRACE OF PLACE ii

Petra Lee





# CARICATURE

Isabelle Hernandez

I break myself into pieces  
 Pieces that fit wherever the frame of me goes and sits  
 Back straight, smooth talking, engaging, professional me  
 she nods at the right time, she takes notes  
 lacks backbone, always politically correct  
 is filled with respect, wears her hair straight  
 so that it doesn't offend  
 Accent? What accent? She doesn't roll the R like  
 her brothers and sisters  
 not like them, better than them  
 She's Puerto Rican, but different, professional  
 Professional, professional me.  
 Solid me, in the streets me  
 throws back tequila like she's thirsty for me  
 fucks a man raw and bullshits some more  
 knows the shit that goes down when the cops aren't around  
 and knows of the white fluff that makes and breaks her life  
 smokes weed when she wants, says fuck the police  
 doesn't give a fuck about what they say por ahi  
 wishes the world would burn  
 so that she might rise from the ashen grave  
 and be a real girl, a solid girl that rules them streets  
 Educated me, smart me  
 will read a book and spit out the truth to those who will listen  
 me  
 if it's not an A, she goes insane, loses her brain me  
 She makes sure Oxfords are marked,  
 smells the spine of her Rutgers me  
 because it reminds her of Fall, when classes start  
 She will inform you of history that no one cares about  
 except for her because unless you know of the conquests  
 how will you be prepared for the defeats  
 Smart me, bookish-girl me  
 She lives in the libraries, has promise, they say

Real Me, in pieces me  
Still trying to find me  
Sometimes lost me  
Unsure, even as I write this me  
Where are you going me  
Who are you really me  
if you find her let me know  
I've been searching for her

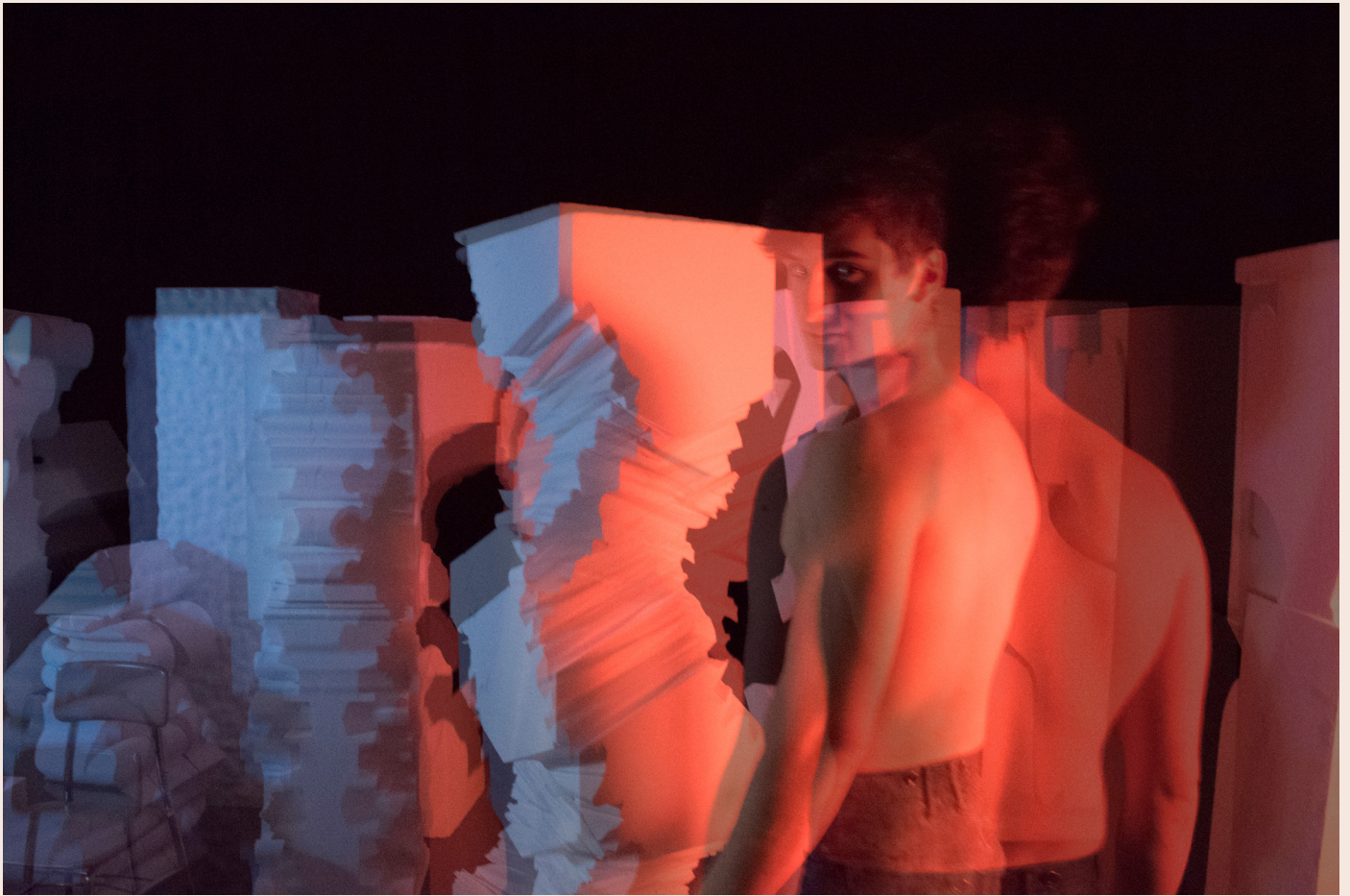
She hides herself behind nude nails, badly  
rolled blunts and books  
Tell her I have pieces of her  
Not sure where they fit  
But shove them in, roll them about  
See if you can shape me  
out of dough  
a resemblance of the real me



**KALEIDESCOPE**

charlotte mann





# THE TOWERS AREN'T REAL BUT HE STILL FEELS THEM

Tanner Vargas

# FIGURE FIELDS

Tanner Vargas







# THEY CAN

Tanner



# ALL BE ME

Vargas



# BIOGRAPHIES

## ART

### MICHAEL ADACHI

At the time of this submission, Michael Adachi is attending the College of San Mateo and will be transferring to San Francisco State University beginning Fall 2018. At SFSU, he will be pursuing a bachelor's degree in Cinema. He enjoys going to concerts in order to support the artists he loves, whose music rejuvenates him. These photos were taken using a Canon 20D. To see more of his work, IG: @versace\_adachi

### MATTEO BONA

Matteo Bona was born on January 1st, 1997, in Asti (Piedmont, Italy). He studied at the Public Scientific Lyceum Francesco Vercelli. Now he studies Foreign Languages and Modern Literatures at the Università del Piemonte Orientale. He published his first poem collection, "Beyond the Poetry" in 2015 and "Nothingness Sense" in January 2018. He received the Roma 3 Academic Prize "Apollo Dionisiaco" for the Unpublished Poem and the "Cesare Beccaria" Prize for the Figurative Art, both in 2016.

He has published the 'Cesare Beccaria,' a prize winning artwork, in the Garfield Lake Review (2018 Issue), paper journal of the Olivet College (Michigan State, USA).

### TERALYN BROWN

Teralyn Brown is an undergraduate student at the University of California, Santa Cruz. When she's not making art, she enjoys watching movies, drinking tea, and going on photo adventures with friends.

### JENNY JUYOUNG KANG

Jenny Juyoung Kang is an undergraduate student at Northeastern University. She is often inspired by her surroundings and expresses her emotions through various forms of art.

### SCOTT KAPLAN

Scott Michael Kaplan (b. 1998) is a fine-art photographer currently receiving his B.A. in Studio Art at Colby College. Through various projects, Kaplan hopes to share instances of humanity that he's witnessed and recorded.

## PETRA LEE

Petra Lee is a senior fine art and graphic design major at Bethel University in St. Paul, MN. Her work focuses on the intersections of person, time and place, as well as history, culture, memory and displacement.

## CHARLOTTE MANN

Charlotte Mann is an artist currently pursuing a BA in Studio Art(Honors with an Advanced Specialization in Painting) and Art History at the University of Maryland College Park. She is part of the UMD Art Honors Program for the 2017-2018 school year and will complete her thesis work in Spring 2018.

## JOSSELYN MORALES

Josselyne Morales is an undergraduate student at UC Santa Cruz. Their rising sun is Taurus and their favorite color is mustard yellow. When she isn't contemplating questions about the wonders of the world she loves to create and go on adventures!

## SARA SCHELLENBERG

Sara Schellenberg is a sophomore at the University of Arkansas, studying English and studio art. She enjoys writing, painting, and making big messes.

## OLIVER STOOPS

Oliver Stoops is an artist studying photography and anthropology at the University of California, Santa Cruz. His work, through the lens of the camera, aims to negotiate the relationship between the individual and the environment in a new American suburban landscape. The neighborhoods of suburbia, once thought to be the pinnacle of domesticity in the American Dream, have now slowly begun to deteriorate; the paint peels on the white picket fence as unfamiliar neighbors stare from their shuttered windows. Here, Stoops finds a sense of isolation from collective normativity.

## TANNER VARGAS

Tanner Vargas is a second year architecture student at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Originally from small-town Texas, he braved the cold move in search of a challenge and NY-style pizza. He's an avid photographer, playing on the club tennis team and diving into art and writing when he's not pulling all-nighters for studio pinups.

## DEANIERA WIBISONO

Rinnah Shaw is a freshman at Taylor University. She is a double major in creative writing and illustration, and her dream is to become a graphic novelist or an animator. Her passions include telling stories, loving on her family, and learning about cultures different than her own. (F)



# POETRY

## MCKAYLA CONAHAN

McKayla Conahan is a queer nonbinary writer living in the heart of South Carolina. They've won prizes from both the South Carolina Academy of Authors as well as the Poetry Society of South Carolina, and have been published in *Miscellany* and others. They're currently finishing their undergraduate degree in Astronomy and trying to raise three dogs right.

## DANIEL EASTMAN

Daniel Eastman is completing his undergraduate degree at Cedar Crest College in Allentown, where he lives with his wife, dogs, and rabbit. He enjoys reading, writing, comic books, and films in the Criterion Collection.

## ISABELLE HERNANDEZ

Isabelle Hernandez is an undergraduate at the University of Central Florida where at the ripe age of 36 she is always the oldest in her classes. She loves writing, traveling, cooking, and philosophizing over a beer.

## MELISSA MARSH

After 21 years of writing between shifts at the coffee shop, photography sessions, and raising a vibrant six year old daughter, Melissa Marsh is finally pursuing an English – Creative Writing degree at Salisbury University. She writes poetry, fiction, and (recently) has started dabbling in creative non fiction. She loves coffee, photography, and traveling to new places as often as possible.

## LEAH WAUGHTAL

Leah Waughtal is a senior at the University of Iowa, majoring in English, Creative Writing and Publishing. She loves horror movies and green tea. She is also deeply appreciative of Sink Hollow for publishing her work.

## ALEXANDER ZITZNER

Alexander Zitzner is an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire studying creative writing. Aside from his time spent studying, he serves as the Editor-In-Chief to their award-winning undergraduate fine arts, literary, and musical publication, *NOTA* (None of the Above).

# FICTION

## RINNAH SHAW

Rinnah Shaw is a freshman at Taylor University. She is a double major in creative writing and illustration, and her dream is to become a graphic novelist or an animator. Her passions include telling stories, loving on her family, and learning about cultures different than her own.

# NONFICTION

## JANE MCKENSIE

Jane Mckensie is an undergraduate student at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia.



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